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What Happens When
Zoo Prisoners Escape

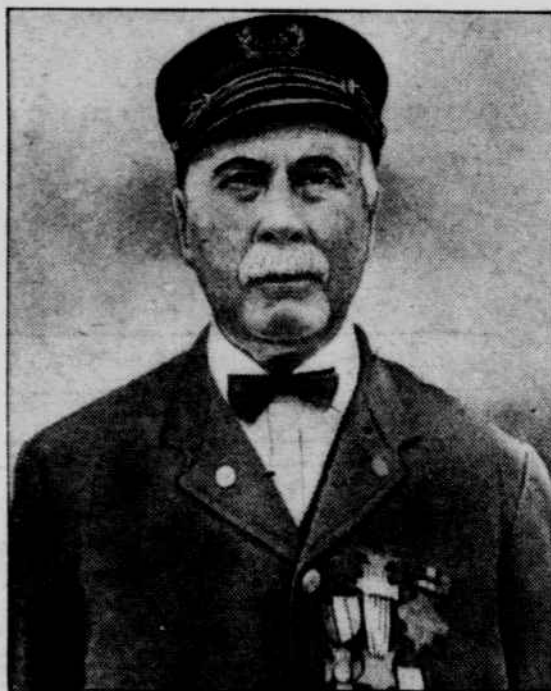
WHEN the caged beast escapes, what then? Thomas Donahue, night keeper in the Central Park Zoo for more than fifty-two years and who retired recently, tells what happens and also recounts other reminiscences as he sits on a bench on Riverside Drive:

"When I went to the Zoo there were only two lions, Lincoln and Jennie, and one Bengal tiger, Kate. The lions and I soon became very chummy, but the tiger was a bad one.

"I used to play with Jennie and she would run around the cage like a big cat. When I would leave in the morning she was always ready to play. There was one morning one of her paws got tangled in my watchchain. I told her not to move and she obeyed like a child, holding her leg still until I got it free. When she had her cubs she would take one at a time in her mouth and come prancing

the Polar bear. We were going to send him down to Madison Square Garden the next morning. In some way the door of the cage we had put him in was left open, and when we went to get him in the morning Mr. Bear was missing. The alarm was given and all hands set out to find him. He was found hiding up near the Mall, but we did not capture him without a fight. I had three loaves of fresh bread placed in his cage, which we had carried to the Mall, and as we were about to get him in he broke loose and made for me. When he came close enough I hit him on the neck with the muzzle of my gun. That took the fight out of him and then when he smelt the bread he went into his cage without further ado."

Donahue next tells of a bad fight between two bulls which began at 8 o'clock one night and lasted for nearly an hour before they could be separated. One of the animals was known as Paddy and the other



Keeper Thomas Donahue, who has retired after watching the cages of the New York Zoo for fifty-two years.

down to the side of her cage with the proud airs of a queen to have me inspect her little ones. That over, she would retire to one corner satisfied that she had done something to please me. Later Bill Snyder succeeded Conklin as head keeper, when several animals were added to the collection.

"Among them were two lions, Leo the First and his mate, Helen. When she gave birth to five cubs Commissioner Charles B. Stover gave them appropriate names. The cubs were traded for other animals to increase the collection.

"I remember the first elephants we got were three fine specimens, Albert, Gip and Emperor. What crowds came to see them in those days! Albert was a trick elephant, but Emperor was a very bad actor, so Gip, rather docile, was placed between them. Emperor had a nasty temper, but I was never afraid of him. One night he broke loose from his chains and became entangled in Gip's chains. I called two of the other keepers to give me a hand, but when they heard that it was Emperor they would not go near his stall.

"The Barnum Circus was playing at the Garden at the time and I went down to get Charley White to come up. It was April 1, and Charley thought we were trying to put over an April fool joke, and when we arrived at the Zoo that impression was further increased, for while I was absent one of the keepers got Fred Rivers, who came and got Emperor free.

"The next adventure I had was with

as Indian Prince. There had been bad blood between the two from the day they were placed in the paddock. Prince got loose and made for Paddy. In another minute the fight was on. Paddy got the better of the argument.

Many of the animals at the Zoo at that time belonged to Barnum & Bailey, who loaned them. We needed some large snakes and Mr. Conklin bought a boa and a python from Hagenbeck. The snakes were each twenty-five feet in length.

"They came to the Zoo in separate crates and were placed in a small room in the basement of the Arsenal Building, the upper floors of which are used as the police station. The circus was in town at the time and Conklin brought some of the men from the show to inspect the snakes. They all agreed that they were two beautiful specimens. In some unexplained way the lid to the box containing the boa was not fastened. The outside door to the room was locked and the party left.

"There was a wall around the room which extended upward to within two feet of the ceiling. One of the rooms adjoining was used for preparing the food for the lions. The snake got out of his quarters during the night, and when Mr. Conklin went there the next morning the boa could not be found. All hands were summoned, and with the aid of several policemen a search was made of the cellar, but no sign of Mr. Snake.

"The policemen above were in mortal

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